

**Oral History Program**

**Biographical Notes**

**Rodney JEFFERY (1942- )**

**Geotechnical Engineer**

**Birth & Family:** Born 2.6.1942 Wagga Wagga. Second child of John William Jeffery (1899) and Mary (nee Lewis) (1910 )  
Siblings Ian (1941); Heather (1946); Howard (1946).

**Education:** Attended primary school at the convent at Moree, Our Lady Help of Christians Convent, Epping (1952 -1953), Secondary School at Marist Brothers, Eastwood (1954-58). Leaving Certificate NSW 1958.

**Qualifications:** B.E. (Civil Engineering) University of NSW 1964  
Diploma of Imperial College London University UK 1969  
Master of Science with Distinction University of London UK 1969

**Memberships:** Fellow of Institute of Engineers.  
Australian Geotechnology Mechanics Society  
Fellow of Geological Society U.K.  
Institute of Arbitrators and Mediators  
Association of Consulting Engineers of Australia

**Work History:** After completing his NSW Leaving Certificate in 1958, Jeffery secured a cadetship with Civil & Civic and started part-time study for B.E. (Civil Engineering) at the University of NSW. A year later he secured a cadetship with the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission at which time he won a scholarship to continue his studies full time.

On completion of his studies in 1963, Jeffery was sent by the Commission as construction engineer to Lake Cawndilla , Menindee Lakes Scheme, where he was directly responsible for borrow area investigation and supervision of all works related to the construction and repairs to the failed earth embankment and outlet structure. In 1965 Jeffery left the Commission and worked as a structural engineer for McDonald Constructions Pty Ltd. He was offered a position in Malaysia in 1966 working on a World Bank project at the Muda River Irrigation Scheme for McDonald's Malaysian interests at National

Construction Company. Jeffery established a central soils and concrete testing laboratory at Alor Setah and trained indigenous staff in testing practices. He was also responsible for acquiring U.K. built drilling rigs and ran three drilling crews for geotechnical investigations throughout the project.

In 1967 he left McDonald and went to England where he worked as a Project Engineer, Ground Engineering Division, for Cementation Co. London, before commencing his Masters Degree at Imperial College London University. He gained extensive Vibroflotation pile and design and construction experience throughout the United Kingdom.

Jeffery returned to Australia in 1969 to the position of Senior Geotechnical Engineer with Coffey & Hollingsworth Pty Ltd. He worked on projects in Tasmania at Renison Dam and Zeehan. In 1970-71 Jeffery supervised and controlled two large earthworks testing laboratories in the Paraburdoo Mine area in Western Australia, including supervision of continuing investigations for one of the world's heaviest rail lines and the construction of a jet airfield to international standards.

In 1973 Jeffery was appointed NSW manager of L.T. Frazer & Associates and undertook feasibility studies for large residential, commercial and industrial subdivisions.

In 1976 Jeffery was joint founding Director of Jeffery & Katauskas Pty Ltd, which is now one of the three big Sydney based Geotechnical Consultants. The staff numbers over 50, half of whom are professional engineers. The company formed its own drilling company, Soil Check Pty Ltd, as a separate entity and it is now one of the largest drilling firms in Sydney. Jeffery & Katauskas performed over 50 geotechnical investigations and testing for the Sydney 2000 Olympics and Jeffery was involved in approximately half of these studies. The firm has completed over 18,000 geotechnical investigations with projects mainly in NSW and the eastern states. Jeffery was involved with several "firsts" for the company – the identification of dispersive soils and the application of "dewatering" technique at a Rose Bay site.

Jeffery has also contributed significantly to the Engineering profession through his personal and joint writings and presentation of publications and papers. Major ones are listed:

- "The Specification, Production and Properties of Quality Fills (1983)
- Joint author of two sections of 1985 reference book titled "Engineering Geology of the Sydney Region";
- Joint sub-committee author of the publication and accepted Sydney Slope Stability benchmark paper titled "Geotechnical risks Associated with Hillside Development" (1985)
- Joint author with Professor R Fell on two sections of reference book titled "Soils Slope Instability and Stabilisation" (1989)

- Joint author paper titled "QA Testing for Earthworks - Are you being conned?" (1995)
- Author of paper "Suitability of Sydney Sandstone for Pavement Construction and Select Fill". for 15th Australian Geological Convention. (2000)
- Joint author and presenter of A.G.S mini symposium on "Earthworks in Western Sydney" 2001

Jeffery retired in 2000 as Director of Jeffery & Katauskas Pty Ltd. He is now acting as a consultant to the firm as well as a consultant to the Insurance Industry in Geotechnical concerns. He also acts as an expert witness in the Supreme Court.

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Prepared by Margaret Torrens, July 2003 from oral history interviews conducted by Margaret Torrens on 12/6/03 and 17/7/03